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United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice

Effective community-based crime prevention

Note by the Secretary-General**

The Secretary-General hereby transmits to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice the report of the Meeting of the Group of Experts on Crime Prevention, which was held in Vancouver, Canada, from 21 to 24 January 2002, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2001/11 of 24 July 2001.

Report of the Meeting of the Group of Experts on Crime Prevention

(Vancouver, Canada, 21-24 January 2002)

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* E/CN.15/2002/1.

** The delay in submitting the present note was due to the late holding of the Meeting of the Group of Experts (21-24 January 2002).

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2001/11 of 24 July 2001, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to convene, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, a meeting of experts selected on the basis of equitable geographical representation, for the purposes of further revising the draft elements of responsible crime prevention annexed to the working paper on effective crime prevention: keeping pace with new developments (A/CONF.187/7) submitted to the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held in Vienna from 10 to 17 April 2000,[1] and of proposing priority areas for international action, including the identification of technical assistance issues, to promote effective community-based crime prevention.

2. In resolution 2001/11, the Council also requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the results of the meeting of the expert group, including its revised version of the draft elements of responsible crime prevention and the priority areas for international action to promote effective community-based crime prevention, to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its eleventh session for its consideration and action.

II. Organization of the Meeting

3. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2001/11, the Meeting of the Group of Experts on Crime Prevention was held in Vancouver, Canada, from 21 to 24 January 2002. It was hosted by the Government of Canada. The Centre for International Crime Prevention of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention of the Secretariat served as the secretariat for the Meeting.

A. Opening of the Meeting

4. The Meeting was opened by David Gates, Executive Director of the National Crime Prevention Centre, Government of Canada.

5. The experts were also welcomed on behalf of the United Nations by the representative of the Centre for International Crime Prevention.

B. Attendance

6. The Meeting was attended by 15 experts from 14 different countries, as well as 8 observers representing affiliated regional and associated institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network and relevant non-governmental and other organizations (see annex I).

C. Election of officers

7. The following officers were elected by acclamation:

Co-Chairpersons:	Mary-Anne Kirvan (Canada) Dorothy Ahlgren Franklin (Canada)
Vice-Chairpersons:	Radim Bures (Czech Republic) Clara Szczaranski (Chile) Abdellatif Saadi (Morocco) Celia Leones (Philippines)
Rapporteur:	Mariano Ciafardini (Argentina)

Gloria Laycock (United Kindgom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) and Irvin Waller (Canada) were invited by the Chairpersons to serve as Friends of the Chair to assist in developing the draft guidelines.

D. Adoption of the agenda

8. The Group of Experts adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the Meeting.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
4. Discussion and development of the final draft elements of responsible crime prevention.
5. Discussion of the priority areas for international action to promote effective community-based crime prevention.
6. Discussion and adoption of the report.
7. Closing of the Meeting.

III. Background

9. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/33, the Secretary-General requested Governments to revise the elements of crime prevention annexed to the resolution. Governments were also invited to comment on the desirability and utility of such an instrument. A summary of the replies received from Governments, as contained in the report of the Secretary-General on crime prevention (E/CN.15/1999/3, paras. 38-62), was submitted to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its eighth session (E/CN.15/1999/7).

10. At the Expert Group Meeting on Elements of Responsible Crime Prevention: Addressing Traditional and Emerging Crime Problems, hosted by the Government of Argentina in Buenos Aires from 8 to 10 September 1999, the draft guidelines on elements of responsible crime prevention were revised and the revised draft was annexed to a working paper prepared by the Secretariat for the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders on effective crime prevention: keeping pace with new developments (A/CONF.187/7).

11. During the discussion at the Tenth Congress, Member States expressed their commitment to advancing effective crime prevention and their support for a well-crafted instrument that would reflect the contribution that effective crime prevention could and should make in terms of the safety and security of individuals, their person and their property in both the private and the public domain and would provide practical guidelines as to how this could be achieved.

12. There was also a clear understanding of the need to adopt a long-term, multifaceted strategy that cut across departments and that went beyond the formal criminal justice system. Analysis of the costs and benefits of preventive programmes for families, children and youth at risk have shown clear cost savings over the medium and long term for Governments and society.

13. In addition, by including relevant recommendations on crime prevention in the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice: Meeting the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century (General Assembly resolution 55/59, annex), adopted by the Tenth Congress, the importance of community-based crime prevention was fully acknowledged. Member States also fully recognized the need for comprehensive and multisectoral crime prevention strategies at the international, national and regional levels that would enable a consolidation of knowledge and experience and assist in the identification of an international agenda for action.[1]

IV. Development of the final draft elements of responsible crime prevention

14. The draft elements of responsible crime prevention prepared by the Expert Group Meeting in Buenos Aires served as the starting point for discussion at the Meeting of the Group of Experts on Crime Prevention held in Vancouver. At that meeting, the experts reviewed in detail all parts of the document and drew up a final draft version of text. The Group of Experts conducted a careful review of the draft elements, leading to the development of a new draft entitled "Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime" (see

annex II). It also established priority areas for international cooperation. The salient points of their discussion are outlined below.

15. The experts agreed that clear evidence showed that preventive measures, complementing criminal justice interventions, constituted cost-effective and humane approaches to reducing crime and victimization.

16. The experts noted that the words "elements of responsible crime prevention" had been used to date as the title to the document, but agreed that a title including the word "guidelines" would better serve the objective of developing a practical instrument.

17. The experts were of the view that, while there were many players in effective crime prevention, the onus was on Governments to take a leadership role. In their view the leadership role of Governments ought to be stated at the outset and more prominently than in the previous draft.

18. There was discussion on the scope of the guidelines and whether they were to focus only on community-based crime prevention or to extend to include other types of crime prevention. Clarification was received from the Secretariat that, while initially the draft elements were not meant to focus on community crime prevention, over the years Member States had become more concerned about that important aspect of crime prevention. Therefore, it was agreed that the main thrust of the proposed guidelines would be to address community-based crime prevention.

19. The experts discussed the role of the criminal justice system in crime prevention, including formal criminal justice sanctions, and considered what emphasis it should be given in the proposed guidelines. It was agreed that, while the criminal justice system performed preventive functions, they were outside the scope of the current guidelines, given their coverage in other standards and norms.

20. The experts examined whether and how best to define crime prevention. It was agreed that a specific definition should be avoided in the text, but that a variety of approaches should be described.

21. There was much discussion on the notion of social and economic development and its linkages to crime prevention. The experts agreed that links and interrelationships among sectors of society were critical to effective crime prevention and concluded that this must be reflected in the proposed guidelines. It was also agreed that the areas of social and economic development should be mentioned in the text (health, education, housing, poverty reduction and employment) and that particular emphasis should also be placed on their inclusion.

22. Partnership was also considered a key component of effective crime prevention strategies.

23. The experts agreed that it was important to recognize the linkages between crime committed at the local level and transnational crime. The importance was therefore stressed of ensuring that comprehensive national, regional and international actions addressed the international dimension of crime and its prevention.

24. The experts discussed the emphasis that should be accorded to vulnerable groups, including the need for emphasis on communities, families, children and youth at risk, and concluded that the guidelines should specifically highlight the need for crime prevention strategies to address the particular needs related to gender and minorities and to respect cultural identity.

25. The experts acknowledged that, in accordance with the Vienna Declaration, crime prevention should at all times be designed and implemented in accordance with the rule of law and with due regard for internationally recognized human rights. There was also consensus as to the importance of creating and stimulating a culture of lawfulness.

26. There was discussion on the roles of all parties in promoting and sustaining crime prevention activities. The experts agreed that Governments had a paramount role in creating the conditions and frameworks conducive to sustainable crime prevention work.

27. It was agreed to include in the proposed guidelines practical methods and approaches for designing, planning, implementing and evaluating crime prevention programmes. The experts stressed the importance of involving the community at all stages and recognized that States would need to adapt methods and approaches so as to take into account their unique governmental structures as well as specific community needs, desires and concerns.

28. The experts were of the view that an international crime prevention framework should set out achievable

and specific tasks and foster international exchange of the most promising practices in crime prevention and that whenever possible technical assistance should be provided to countries requesting it.

29. There was consensus on cooperation in promoting international action in crime prevention, taking into account the relevant international instruments. There was also a call for increased financial assistance and for capacity-building and training in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

V. Priority areas for international action to promote effective community-based crime prevention

30. The experts agreed on the following priority areas for international action:

(a) *Inter-agency coordination*. Relevant entities of the United Nations system and the specialized agencies should strengthen inter-agency coordination and cooperation in crime prevention, as set out in the proposed guidelines for the prevention of crime. To that end, the guidelines should be disseminated widely within the United Nations system;

(b) *Technical assistance and fundraising*. The Centre for International Crime Prevention and the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network of affiliated institutes should prepare, in consultation with Member States, a global programme on crime prevention in order to implement pilot technical assistance projects, including research and capacity-building, in developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the context of good governance and to take action to mobilize funds for that purpose. A roster of experts to undertake needs assessment and to provide advice should also be compiled;

(c) *Networking*. Member States should establish or strengthen national, regional and international crime prevention networks with a view to developing knowledge-based strategies, exchanging best and promising practices, identifying elements that were transferable, and making such knowledge available to communities throughout the world. To that end, the Programme network of affiliated and associated institutes should be given additional support. Direct cooperation between cities in crime prevention should also be encouraged;

(d) *Dissemination*. Relevant United Nations bodies, in cooperation with Member States, should produce guides, manuals, handbooks and tool kits on community-based crime prevention for dissemination and training in appropriate languages through print, the Internet and other means to Member States;

(e) *Public awareness*. The Centre for International Crime Prevention and the Programme network, in collaboration with Member States and specialized expert organizations, should conduct public awareness and education campaigns on effective and humane crime prevention and the respective contributions that individuals, families, communities and all levels of government could make towards safer and more peaceful communities;

(f) *"Designing out" crime*. The Centre for International Crime Prevention should explore ways to encourage the corporate sector to design their products so that they were less vulnerable to crime;

(g) *High-level meeting*. Crime prevention should be selected as an item on the agenda of the high-level segment at the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in order to encourage political commitment to the development and sustainability of crime prevention programmes, including international cooperation;

(h) *Timetable*. The Centre for International Crime Prevention, in cooperation with Member States, should implement activities in the above priority areas for international cooperation by 2005 and prepare a report on progress for submission to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its session immediately following the Eleventh Congress.

Notes

[1] See *Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Vienna, 10-17 April 2000: report prepared by the Secretariat* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.IV.8).

Annex I

List of participants in the Meeting of the Group of Experts

Experts

Sarunas Adomavicius (Lithuania)

Radim Bures (Czech Republic)

K. Chockalingam (India)

Mariano Ciafardini (Argentina)

Dorothy Ahlgren Franklin (Canada)

Dianne Heriot (Australia)

Klara Kerezsi (Hungary)

Mary-Anne Kirvan (Canada)

Celia Leones (Philippines)

Norman Moleboge (Botswana)

Kurt Neudek (Uganda)

Andrzej Przemyski (Poland)

Abdellatif Saadi (Morocco)

Clara Szczaranski (Chile)

Edwin Zedlewski (United States of America)

Observers

United Nations Secretariat

Centre for International Crime Prevention of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention
Jan van Dijk

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)
Franz Vanderschuren

Affiliated regional institutes and associated institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network

Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders
Elias Carranza

European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations
Kauko Aromaa

African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders
Eric Kibuka

International Centre for the Prevention of Crime
Margaret Shaw

Non-governmental organizations

Jill Dando Institute of Crime Sciences
Gloria Laycock

World Society of Victimology
Irvin Waller

Other

Sicilian Regional Assembly
Leoluca Orlando

Annex II

Revised draft Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime

I. Introduction

1. There is clear evidence that well-planned crime prevention strategies not only prevent crime and victimization, but also promote community safety and contribute to the sustainable development of countries. Effective, responsible crime prevention enhances the quality of life of all citizens and reflects core values and human rights. It has long-term benefits in terms of reducing the costs associated with the formal criminal justice system, as well as other social costs that result from crime. Crime prevention offers opportunities for a more cost-effective and humane approach to the problems of crime. The present Guidelines outline the necessary elements for effective crime prevention in the context of good governance.

II. Conceptual frame of reference

2. It is the responsibility of all levels of government to create, maintain and promote a context within which relevant governmental institutions and all segments of civil society, including the corporate sector, can better play their part in preventing crime.

3. For the purposes of the present Guidelines, "crime prevention" comprises strategies and measures that seek to reduce the risk of crimes occurring, and their potential harmful effects on individuals and society, including fear of crime, by intervening to influence their multiple causes. The enforcement of laws, sentences and corrections, while also performing preventive functions, falls outside the scope of the Guidelines, given the comprehensive coverage of the subject in other United Nations instruments.[a]

4. The present Guidelines address crime and its effects on victims and society and take into account the growing internationalization of criminal activities.

5. Community involvement and partnerships represent important elements of the concept of crime prevention set out herein.

6. Crime prevention encompasses a wide range of approaches, including those which:

(a) Promote the well-being of people and encourage pro-social behaviour through social, economic, health and educational measures, with a particular emphasis on children and youth, and focus on the risk and protective factors associated with crime and victimization (prevention through social development or social crime prevention);

(b) Change the conditions in neighbourhoods that influence offending, victimization and the insecurity that results from crime by building on the initiatives, expertise and commitment of community members (locally based crime prevention);

(c) Prevent the occurrence of crimes by reducing opportunities, increasing risks of being apprehended and minimizing benefits, including through environmental design, and by providing assistance and information to potential and actual victims (situational crime prevention);

(d) Prevent recidivism by assisting in the social reintegration of offenders (reintegration programmes).

III. Basic principles

Government leadership

7. All levels of government should play a leadership role in developing effective and humane crime prevention strategies and in creating and maintaining institutional frameworks for their implementation and review.

Socio-economic development and inclusion

8. Crime prevention considerations should be integrated into all relevant social and economic policies and programmes, including those addressing employment, education, health, housing and urban planning, poverty, social marginalization and exclusion. Particular emphasis should be placed on communities, families, children and youth at risk.

Partnerships

9. Partnerships are an integral part of effective crime prevention, given the wide-ranging nature of the causes of crime and the skills and responsibilities required to address them. This includes partnerships working across ministries and between authorities, community organizations, non-governmental organizations, the business sector and private citizens.

Sustainability/accountability

10. Crime prevention requires adequate resources, including funding for structures and activities, in order to be sustained. There should be clear accountability for funding, implementation and evaluation and for the achievement of planned results.

Knowledge base

11. Crime prevention strategies, policies, programmes and actions should be based on a broad, multidisciplinary foundation of knowledge about crime problems, their multiple causes and promising and proven practices.

Human rights/rule of law/culture of lawfulness

12. The rule of law and internationally recognized human rights must be respected in all aspects of crime prevention. A culture of lawfulness should be actively promoted in crime prevention.

Interdependency

13. National crime prevention diagnoses and strategies should, where appropriate, take account of links between local criminal problems and international organized crime.

Differentiation

14. Crime prevention strategies should pay due regard to the different needs of men and women and to different cultural identities and minorities.

IV. Organization, methods and approaches

15. Recognizing that all States have unique governmental structures, this section sets out tools and methodologies that Governments and all segments of civil society should consider in developing strategies to prevent crime and reduce victimization. It draws on international good practice.

Community involvement

16. In some of the areas listed below, Governments bear the primary responsibility. However, the active participation of communities and other segments of civil society is an essential part of effective crime prevention. Communities, in particular, can play an important part in identifying crime prevention priorities, in implementation and evaluation, and in helping identify a sustainable resource base.

A. Organization

Government structures

17. Governments should include prevention as a permanent part of their structures and programmes for controlling crime, ensuring that clear responsibilities and goals exist within government for the organization of crime prevention, by, inter alia:

(a) Establishing centres or focal points with expertise and resources;

(b) Establishing a crime prevention plan with clear priorities and targets;

(c) Establishing linkages and coordination between relevant government agencies or departments;

(d) Fostering partnerships with non-governmental organizations, the business, private and professional sectors and the community;

(e) Seeking the active participation of the public in crime prevention by informing it of the need for and means of action and its role.

Training and capacity-building

18. Governments should support the development of crime prevention skills by:

(a) Providing professional development for senior officials in relevant agencies;

(b) Encouraging universities, colleges and other relevant educational agencies to offer basic and advanced courses, including in collaboration with practitioners;

(c) Working with the educational and professional sectors to develop certification and professional qualifications;

(d) Promoting the capacity of communities to develop and respond to their needs.

Supporting partnerships

19. Governments and all segments of civil society should support the principle of partnership, where appropriate, including:

(a) Advancing knowledge of the importance of this principle and the components of successful partnerships, including the need for all of the partners to have clear and transparent roles;

(b) Fostering their formation at different levels and across sectors;

(c) Facilitating their efficient operation.

Sustainability

20. Governments and other funding bodies should strive to achieve sustainability of demonstrably effective crime prevention programmes and initiatives through, inter alia:

(a) Reviewing resource allocation to establish and maintain an appropriate balance between crime prevention and the criminal justice and other systems, to be more effective in preventing crime and victimization;

(b) Establishing clear accountability for funding, programming and coordinating crime prevention initiatives;

(c) Encouraging community involvement in sustainability.

B. Methods

Knowledge base

21. As appropriate, Governments and/or civil society should facilitate knowledge-based crime prevention by, inter alia:

(a) Providing the tools necessary for communities to address crime problems;

(b) Supporting the generation of useful and practically applicable knowledge that is scientifically reliable and valid;

(c) Supporting the organization and synthesis of knowledge and identifying and addressing gaps in the knowledge base;

(d) Sharing that knowledge, as appropriate, among, inter alia, researchers, policy makers, educators, practitioners from other relevant sectors and the wider community;

(e) Applying this knowledge in replicating successful interventions, developing new initiatives and anticipating new crime problems and prevention opportunities;

(f) Establishing data systems to help manage crime prevention more cost-effectively, including by conducting regular surveys of victimization and offending;

(g) Promoting the application of those data in order to reduce repeat victimization, persistent offending and areas with a high level of crime.

Planning interventions

22. Those planning interventions should promote a process that includes:

(a) A systematic analysis of crime problems, their causes, risk factors and consequences, in particular at the local level;

(b) A plan that draws on the most appropriate approach and adapts interventions to the specific local problem and context;

(c) An implementation plan to deliver appropriate interventions that are efficient, effective and sustainable;

(d) Mobilizing entities that are able to tackle causes;

(e) Monitoring and evaluation.

Support evaluation

23. Governments, other funding bodies and those involved in programme development and delivery should:

(a) Undertake short- and longer-term evaluation to test rigorously what works, where and why;

(b) Undertake cost-benefit analyses;

(c) Assess the extent to which action results in a reduction in levels of crime and victimization, in the seriousness of crime and in fear of crime;

(d) Systematically assess the outcomes and unintended consequences, both positive and negative, of action, such as a decrease in crime rates or the stigmatization of individuals and/or communities.

C. Approaches

24. This section expands upon the social developmental and situational crime prevention approaches. It also outlines approaches that Governments and civil society should endeavour to follow in order to prevent organized crime.

Social development

25. Governments should address the risk factors of crime and victimization by:

(a) Promoting protective factors through comprehensive and non-stigmatizing social and economic development programmes, including health, education, housing and employment;

(b) Promoting activities that redress marginalization and exclusion;

(c) Promoting positive conflict resolution;

(d) Using education and public awareness strategies to foster a culture of lawfulness and tolerance while respecting cultural identities.

Situational

26. Governments and civil society, including where appropriate the corporate sector, should support the development of situational crime prevention programmes by, inter alia:

(a) Improved environmental design;

(b) Appropriate methods of surveillance that are sensitive to the right to privacy;

(c) Encouraging the design of "crime-proof" products;

(d) Target "hardening" without impinging upon the quality of the built environment or limiting free access to public space;

(e) Implementing strategies to prevent repeat victimization.

Prevention of organized crime

27. Governments and civil society should endeavour to analyse and address the links between transnational organized crime and national and local crime problems by, inter alia:

(a) Reducing existing and future opportunities for organized criminal groups to participate in lawful markets with the proceeds of crime, through appropriate legislative, administrative or other measures;

(b) Developing measures to prevent the misuse by organized criminal groups of tender procedures conducted by public authorities and of subsidies and licences granted by public authorities for commercial activity;

(c) Designing crime prevention strategies, where appropriate, to protect socially marginalized groups, especially women and children, who are vulnerable to the action of organized criminal groups, including trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants.

V. International cooperation

Standards and norms

28. In promoting international action in crime prevention, Member States should set out achievable and specific tasks that take into account the main international instruments related to human rights and crime prevention, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (General Assembly resolution 44/25, annex), the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (resolution 48/104), the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (The Riyadh Guidelines) (resolution 45/112, annex), the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power (resolution 40/34, annex), Guidelines for Cooperation and Technical Assistance in the Field of Urban Crime Prevention (Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/9, annex), as well as the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice: Meeting the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century (General Assembly resolution 55/59, annex) and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto (resolutions 55/25, annexes I-III, and 55/255, annex).

Technical assistance

29. Member States and relevant international funding organizations should provide financial and technical assistance, including capacity-building and training, to developing countries and countries with economies in transition, communities and other relevant organizations for the implementation of effective crime prevention and community safety strategies at the regional, national and local levels. In that context, special attention should be given to research and action on crime prevention through social development.

Networking

30. Member States should strengthen or establish international, regional and national crime prevention networks with a view to exchanging best and promising practices, identifying elements of their transferability and making such knowledge available to communities throughout the world.

Links between transnational and local crime

31. Member States should collaborate to analyse and address the links between transnational organized crime and national and local crime problems.

Prioritizing crime prevention

32. The Centre for International Crime Prevention, the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network of affiliated and associated institutes and other relevant United Nations entities should include in their priorities crime prevention as set out in these Guidelines, set up a coordination mechanism and establish a roster of experts to undertake needs assessment and to provide technical advice.

Dissemination

33. Relevant United Nations bodies and other organizations should cooperate to produce crime prevention information in as many languages as possible, using both print and electronic media.

Notes

* See *Compendium of United Nations Standards and Norms in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.92.IV.1 and corrigendum).